

University of Pittsburgh

School of Education

Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading, Fall 2023

***TCH & LRNG IN SEC SOCL STDS 1 (TLL 2260/1591)***

3 Semester Hours

5108 Wesley W Posvar Hall

Mon & Wed 3:00 pm - 4:15 pm

**A Living Course Syllabus**

**Professor**:

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**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to secondary social sciences pedagogy, including lesson design. Drawing on critical theories of instruction, students learn to design and evaluate lesson plans. Teacher candidates will learn the characteristics of social sciences classrooms, curriculum, and instruction that are inquiry-based, cognitively challenging, and engaging for youth. The course focuses on how to create lessons that are engaging, relevant, and aligned with state standards. This course also focuses on constructing a transformative learning environment.

**Texts**:

All Reading will be made available in Canvas or by hyperlink on the syllabus.

**Questions to Consider:**

As we engage important sociocultural distinctions and sociopolitical formations, we will explore their relationship to history/social studies teaching and learning. Some question to consider are:

* What is history?
* What is the role of a history/social studies teacher?
* How do we achieve social justice in our classrooms and beyond?

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, class members will:

1. Understand and value the importance of creating a transformative learning environment that challenges oppressive systems and empowers students to be agents of social change.
2. Grasp the foundations of secondary social sciences pedagogy, integrating critical theories of instruction, and apply this knowledge to design, implement, and evaluate lesson plans.
3. Identify, discuss, and critically analyze pressing local, national, and global issues, especially those disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized communities.
4. Develop lesson plans that are not only engaging and aligned with state standards but also culturally relevant, fostering a deeper connection with contemporary societal challenges and the lived experiences of students.
5. Cultivate an understanding of the characteristics and benefits of inquiry-based social sciences classrooms, ensuring content is challenging and genuinely engaging for youth.
6. Engage in continuous self-reflection on one's teaching practice, constantly aligning with the overarching goal of being a social change agent within the realm of secondary social studies education.

**Course Context:**

Many students across the U.S. enroll in teacher education programs fueled by a passion to transform the world, enrich and empower their students, and stand against oppressive systems. Unfortunately, it quickly becomes apparent that these programs are often ill-equipped to cultivate such activist educators. Few prioritize teaching for social justice — a concept that is challenging to grasp and even more difficult to identify and implement. This course bravely grapples with the conceptualization of social justice. In addition to exploring systems of oppression, we will identify and illustrate how social justice principles can be applied both within the classroom and beyond.

History/social studies teachers need a range of skills in order to be effective in their roles. Some of the most important skills for history/social studies teachers include:

* **Knowledge of historical content** and the ability to convey it to students in a way that is engaging and understandable. This typically requires extensive study and understanding of history, including knowledge of different time periods, events, and key figures.
* **Strong communication and presentation skills**, as history teachers need to be able to clearly explain complex ideas and historical concepts to students. They also need to be able to answer questions and facilitate discussions in a way that encourages student engagement and critical thinking.
* The **ability to plan and organize lessons and activities** that are both educational and engaging. History teachers need to be able to create lesson plans that help students understand and retain important information, and they need to be able to adapt their teaching approach to the needs of individual students.
* A **passion for history** and a desire to share that passion with students. History teachers should be enthusiastic about the subject they are teaching and be able to inspire students to learn more and become interested in history.

Activists and organizers need a variety of skills in order to be effective in their work. Some of the key skills that are important for activists and organizers include:

* **Communication skills:** Activists and organizers need to be able to clearly and effectively communicate their ideas and messages to others. This includes the ability to speak publicly, write persuasive documents, and engage in productive dialogue with others.
* **Leadership skills:** Activists and organizers often need to take on leadership roles within their organizations and communities. This requires the ability to inspire and motivate others, make difficult decisions, and delegate tasks effectively.
* **Strategic thinking**: Activists and organizers need to be able to think strategically about their campaigns and efforts. This involves setting goals, developing plans, and anticipating potential obstacles and challenges.
* **Networking and relationship-building:** Activists and organizers need to be able to build relationships and networks with others who share their goals and objectives. This includes the ability to engage with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and to build coalitions and alliances.
* **Persistence and Resilience:** Activism and organizing can be challenging and often involve setbacks and obstacles. Activists and organizers need to be persistent and resilient, and to continue to work towards their goals even in the face of challenges.
* **Collaboration:** Activism and organizing often involve working with other people and organizations in order to achieve common goals. Activists and organizers need to be able to build strong relationships and to work effectively as part of a team. This requires good interpersonal skills, including the ability to listen, to compromise, and to resolve conflicts.
* **Creativity:** Activism and organizing often require thinking outside the box and coming up with new and innovative ways to address problems and achieve change. Activists and organizers need to be creative and flexible, and to be able to think creatively and strategically in order to develop effective solutions to the challenges they face.

**Assignments**:

1. **Op-Ed or Think Piece**:
   1. Students will submit **(2)** op-eds or think pieces. This piece of writing must be made publicly available on (**Medium.com**). Students will turn in the original piece of writing on Canvas and share the link to the blog at the top of the page.
      1. Requirement:
         1. Must be based on what we have learned.
         2. Must include an interesting title.
         3. Must have at least two images, pictures or videos embedded in the writing.
         4. Must have been proofread and edited using some sort of editing tool like Grammarly, ProWritingAid, Outwrite, or an editing tool on your computer.
         5. Must be publicly available (pseudonyms are allowed)
2. **Race/Socioeconomic Status Comparison of Public Schools in Pittsburgh PPT:**
   1. Each student should prepare a 3-5 slide PowerPoint that compares two Pittsburgh public schools on the basis of race, geography, and socioeconomic status in order to assess their learning outcomes. It would be helpful if you could provide us with a detailed profile of these schools. There needs to be a slide listing resources in the community that may be useful to the schools. Think about more than simply educational services (food, housing, mental health, medical).
      1. You can use [this](https://www.niche.com/k12/compare/) or [this](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/search) to gather school profiles.
3. **Teach a 10-Minute Lesson**
   1. Students will present a 10-minute lesson on a topic they believe has social justice implications for their students, their families, and their communities. Prior to the actual teaching date, the topic will have been discussed and approved.
      1. Requirements
         1. **Lesson Title**: The topic to be taught
         2. **Learner Objective(s)/Learning Target(s**): Explain what the students should know and be able to do upon completion of the mini-lesson. Clearly identify the knowledge and skills that they will acquire.Ensure that your students know what they will learn, why it is important to them and how it relates to their lives or their learning?
         3. **Resources/Materials**: List all resources/materials used to create your lesson e.g., books, professional journal; specific websites, instructional materials and programs; school personnel.
         4. **Teaching the Lesson/Instructional Methods**: List activities you will use to deliver instruction.
         5. **Closure**: What will be done to end the lesson or transition to the next?
         6. **Strategies for Learning and Management**: What will be done to keep all students engaged and to maintain good classroom management?
         7. **Reflection**: Respond to the following statements about your lesson, instructional approach, and classroom  
            management strategies:  
            1) What went well?  
            2) What did not work the way you hoped or what limitations occurred?  
            3) What would you do to improve this lesson?
4. **Lesson Plan Portfolio:**
   1. Create a portfolio of three lesson plans that integrate social justice themes into the secondary social studies curriculum. These lessons should demonstrate your ability to design engaging, relevant, and standards-aligned instruction.
      1. Requirements:
         1. For each lesson, include a title, learning objectives, materials list, step-by-step instructions, and plans for assessment and closure.
         2. Provide a brief reflection on each lesson, explaining how it advances social justice and how you anticipate students might respond.
5. **Community Resource Classroom Memo:**
   1. Conduct research and write a classroom memo that identifies and describes at least five community resources that could support students' learning and wellbeing. The resources might address needs such as food security, housing, mental health, or academic support.
      1. Requirements:
         1. Submit a well-researched and creative classroom memo that provides a detailed profile of at least five community resources and explaining what they offer and how they could help students.
         2. Include at least one resource that addresses each of the following areas: 1) physical health, 2) mental health, 3) academic support, 4) food security, 5) and housing.
6. **Final Reflective Essay:**
7. Students will close this course with a 3-5 page essay that cites at least (5) things we've read and (5) things we've watched and how those readings and viewings might be able to help you impact positive social change in the classroom and community.
   1. A rubric will be provided.

**Grading**

Your final grade in the class will be calculated as a percentage to determine your grade based on the traditional 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; 59% or below = F.

1. **(2)** Op-Eds or Think Pieces 20%
2. Race/Socioeconomic Status Comparison PPT 10%
3. 10-Minute Lesson 20%
4. Lesson Plan Portfolio 20%
5. Community Resource Classroom Memo 10%
6. Final Reflective Essay 20%

**Total** 100 pts.

**\*Mental Health Note:** All students taking my courses are allowed (1) excuse-free mental health day. If you feel stressed or overwhelmed, take your day. Please notify me with an email that reads “Needed a personal day.” There will be no questions asked. Please make up anything you missed upon your return.

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| **Course Schedule** |

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| **Week 1** | **Aug 28 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Aug 30 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **Welcome, Introductions, and Building Classroom Community** | **Watch:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Syllabus discussion * What is this notion of “belonging” and is this a useful tool for establishing norms and safety? If not, what might you use in the classroom? * Write one community agreement that is necessary for you to feel safe in class. Share out. * Community Building Activity |
| **Week 2** | **Sep 6 (W)** | **The Intersection of Politics and Education** | **Watch:**  **Read:**  **Listen** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Reading, viewing, and listening discussion * Debate: Should Politics Be Allowed in Schools? * Personal Reflections on School |
| **Week 3** | **Sep 11 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Sep 13 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **The Role of the Social Studies Teacher in Shaping History**  **Op-Ed # 1 Due** | **Watch:**  **Read:**  **Listen:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Reading, viewing, and listening discussion * 4 Corners: History Teacher Should.. * Personal Reflections on School |
| **Week 4** | **Sep 18 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Sep 20 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **Segregation, Civil Rights, and Education** | **Watch:**  **Read:**  **Listen:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Structured Discussion   + What events helped to create a national conversation around segregated schools?   + What was the Brown v. Board decision?   + What were the outcomes and consequences of Brown?   + Why is Nina Simone upset?   + Should schools be separated on the basis of race? Why? Why not? |
| **Week 5** | **Sep 25 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Sep 27 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **What Are Schools?**  **Race/Socioeconomic Status Comparison PPT** | **Watch:**  **Read:**  **Listen:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Reading, viewing, and listening discussion * Podcast: What are schools? Who do they serve? Can you explain why there seems to be discontent with American schools? |
| **Week 6** | **Oct 2 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Oct 4 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **Building a Community Inside and Outside the Classroom** | **Watch:**  **Read:**  **Listen:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Reading, viewing, and listening discussion * Chalktalk: What is the purpose of community building? What are some material examples of community building? |
| **Week 7** | **Oct 9 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Oct 11 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **Revolutionary Solidarity in Education**  **Op-Ed #2** | **Watch:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Debate: Revolutionary solidarity should be taught and practiced by teachers. One side will argue the affirmative the other side will argue the negative. |
| **Week 8** | **Oct 16 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Oct 18 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **Queer and Black Queer in Social Studies Education** | **Watch:**  **Read:**  **Listen/Watch:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Group Research Activity: Find information on a queer or trans activist or organizer and introduce the class to that person and their work. * Be creative! |
| **Week 9** | **Oct 23 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Oct 25 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **Critical Reflection, Mindfulness, & Meditation: Implication for Teaching**  **Lesson Plan Portfolio** | **Watch:**  **Read**  **Listen:** | **Classroom Activities:** |
| **Week 10** | **Oct 30 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Nov 1 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **The Legacy of U.S. Enslavement** | **Read:**  **Watch:**  **Listen:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Group Activity: Create a full lesson plan using these materials. * Group presentations |
| **Week 11** | **Nov 6 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Nov 8 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **School-Prison Nexus**  **Community Resource Classroom Memo** | **Engage With:** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Group Activity: Create a full lesson plan using these materials. * Group presentations |
| **Week 12** | **Nov 13 (M)**  **Nov 15 (W)** | **Reading, Writing, and Rioting** | **No readings but please take notes** | **Classroom Activities:**   * **Guest Lecturer** |
| **Week 13** | **Nov 27 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Nov 29 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **We Teach**  **10-Minute Lessons** | **No readings but please take notes** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Presentations |
| **Week 14** | **Dec 4 (M)**  Reading Discussions  **Dec 6 (W)**  Classroom Activities | **We Still Teach**  **10-Minute Lessons** | **No readings but please take notes** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Presentations |
| **Week 15** | **Dec 8 (F)**  Extra class to replace Labor Day class.  Not Required | **Getting Free**  **Final Reflection Essay Due** | **Deep reflection and closing this chapter** | **Classroom Activities:**   * Recap the course goals and objectives * Celebrate the work we’ve done * Make commitments to social justice praxis |

**Resources and Accommodations**

*COVID-19 SOE Resources: COVID-19 Resources and Guidance | School of Education | University of Pittsburgh*

*COVID-19 CUE Resources: CUE Resources | Center for Urban Education | University of Pittsburgh*

*COVID Testing (Same-day results): Rapid COVID-19 Testing | The COVID-19 Testing Center of Pittsburgh, PA (covidtestpittsburgh.com)*

*Pitt non-discrimination policy*: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/about/notice-non-discrimination

*Parenting and pregnant student rights*:

https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/resources/pregnant-and-parenting-students

*LGBTQIA rights*: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/resources/resources-diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources

*Codes of conduct and violence against women:* https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/policies-procedures

*Gender transition and inclusion guidelines*:

https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/resources/resources-diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources/guidel ines-inclusion-relating-gender

*Disability accommodation*. Any student who needs accommodations should inform me at the beginning of the course or as soon as one needs accommodations. To receive accommodations, you must apply for services with the Pitt Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 3959 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, Phone: 412-648-7890, Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Email: DRSRECEP@pitt.edu

**NOTE**: It is possible that university language around equity and inclusion follows antiquated frameworks. For instance, you may find that the parenting and pregnant students policy does not speak to various pathways of parenting and family. Should you be adopting, fostering, or otherwise significantly shifting your dependent care demands, or should you be a student whose gender is not clearly covered by the policy and is pregnant, etc., and would like accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible so we can work together to establish a fair plan. Let us also work together to establish plans anywhere and when institutional policy and guidelines do not accommodate needs.

Additionally, the Pitt Writing Center offers services for students. You may schedule appointments at writingcenter.pitt.edu. Location: 3178 O’Hara Student Center, 4024 O’Hara Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, Phone: 412-624-6556.

*Inclement weather policy.* If Pitt is closed due to inclement weather or other conditions, students are to assume that all classes on and off campus are canceled and all offices in all units will be closed.

*Formatting*. American Psychological Association. (2019). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Washington, DC.

*Text to Speech Readers*

● Speechify app (free and paid versions) https://speechify.com/ (Sarah)

● Natural readers (free and paid versions) https://www.naturalreaders.com/ (Stacey)

*Resources for Life Circumstances*

*Campus Police.* If you are accosted or harassed by campus police, please contact Rochelle Woods, Senior Assistant Dean for SOE Administration, rlw75@pitt.edu. Additional resources are available here: Cops Off Campus Coalition – an abolition network to get cops off campus and cops off the planet

*Hunger*. Pitt Pantry offers the following: “All members of the Pitt community are welcome to visit the pantry. Through a self-certification form, shoppers are eligible to use the pantry if they earn less than 150% of the federal poverty line, a state regulation, which equals $18,090 for a household of one and $24,360 dollars for a household of two.” For questions regarding eligibility, please email pantry@pitt.edu. Additional resources are the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (pittsburghfoodbank.org).

*Safe and stable shelter*. Please see resources at the following links:

Housing and housing justice: honorscollege.pitt.edu

Housing resources: pitt.libguides.com

*Women’s Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh*. The 24-hour hotline is 412-687-8005. The website is wcspittsburgh.org

*SisTers PGH Community Center* is a safe space for trans people of color. Phone: 412-259-3091, Website: www.sisterspgh.com

*Racialized and gender-based discrimination.* Contact the Pitt Title IX Office. Community members may visit the office during scheduled office hours without an appointment. Students, staff and faculty can also call 412-648-4034 or email to schedule an appointment. For more information, go to https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/policies-procedures.

*Sexual violence*. The Pitt Student Affairs site offers several resources and contact numbers. Visit [studentaffairs@pitt.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@pitt.edu).[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. These resources were adopted from Dr. T. Elon Dancy’s courses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)